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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT,

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2004

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE THEMES:

HEADLINES

BRIEFING

EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

HEADLINES

HEADLINES

HEADLINES

MASS APPEALS

Erdogan's historic visit to Iran - Sabah

American 'protection' for People's Mujahedeen - Milliyet

Turkey opens ports to Greek Cypriot vessels - Sabah

'US giants' Carter, Clinton, Gore give Kerry full support

- Milliyet

Clinton show at Kerry convention - Hurriyet

\$1 million Turkish aid for Palestine - Milliyet

Castro: Bush mentally ill - Hurriyet

Castro: Bush an alcoholic - Aksam

Islamic Art Exhibition carries 'God's voice' to US -

Aksam

OPINION MAKERS

PM Erdogan: Turkey will improve relations with Iran -

Yeni Safak

US not uneasy with Erdogan's Iran visit - Yeni Safak

Greek Cypriots fire at Wolfowitz - Cumhuriyet

Greek lobby launches campaign against Wolfowitz - Zaman

Greek lobby wants Wolfowitz sacked - Radikal

Clinton boosts morale of Democrats - Cumhuriyet

Clinton provides fresh blood for Kerry - Radikal

Clinton a 'soldier' for Kerry - Zaman

US 'umbrella' for People's Mujahedeen - Cumhuriyet

Israeli police put Masjid-al-Haram ban for Jews - Yeni

Safak

BRIEFING

PM Erdogan's Iran visit: PM Erdogan said Tuesday that he would ask Iran to put PKK/Kongra Gel on its list of terrorist groups before flying to Iran for a two-day visit starting Wednesday. Prior to Erdogan's visit, Iranian security forces this month launched a crackdown on PKK militants hiding on Iranian territory along the border with Turkey, in which 10 rebels and two Iranian soldiers were killed. Tehran shares Ankara's concerns that any move towards greater autonomy by the Kurds in northern Iraq could spark unrest in neighboring countries. A disagreement over the price of natural gas Turkey is importing from Iran as well as a dispute over a contract on the operation of the Imam Khomeini Airport by a Turkish-led consortium were also expected to be discussed, Turkish papers report. Erdogan said economic cooperation would also be high on the agenda of his meetings, noting that the two countries should double the current bilateral trade volume of \$2.5 billion in the mid-term. "There has been improvement both in our political and economic relations with Iran in the past several years... We will explore ways and opportunities of further improving our cooperation in all fields," Erdogan said. Erdogan will meet with President Khatami and his first aide, Reza Arif. He will also deliver a speech at the Turkey-Iran Business Forum. A group of about 130 businessmen is traveling with the Turkish prime minister on his trip. "Milliyet" claims that Erdogan has received a last-minute warning from the US Embassy in Ankara with regard to US laws envisaging sanctions for companies that would make oil or natural gas deals with Iran. Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 (ILSA) requires the US President to impose sanctions on companies making energy investments of over \$20 million annually in Iran and Libya, "Milliyet" notes. US crackdown on Iraqi Kurdish office: Coalition forces in northern Iraq have raided a PKK-affiliated office in Kirkuk, papers report. On Monday, US troops broke into

the "Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party" office and detained several PKK militants. Dailies regard the crackdown as part of America's plans for breaking the organizational structure of the PKK as well as meeting Ankara's expectations for elimination of the group's presence in the region. "Radikal" reports US Ankara Embassy officials as saying that Washington had ordered an investigation into the incident.

US gives terrorists 'refugee status': The US Administration has given 4,000 members of the Iranian opposition group "People's Mujahedeen" in the "Ashraf" camp in eastern Iraq refugee status within the framework of the Geneva Convention, papers report. People's Mujahedeen will remain on the list of terror organizations, and its members involved in terrorist attacks will be deprived of their refugee status. Iran has asked for extradition of Mujahedeen members, papers note.

Greek Cypriot dialogue attempts with Turkey: "Sabah" reports from Athens that Greek Cypriot officials have launched an attempt for dialogue with Turkey. Greek Cypriot Transport Ministry officials said Turkey had begun giving Greek Cypriot vessels access to Turkish ports. Greek officials have welcomed the Turkish move as being "extremely important and positive," says "Sabah." Greek sources told "Sabah" that air corridors between south Cyprus and Turkey, which were kept closed since 1974, would be opened soon. Direct flights between the Greek Nicosia and major Turkish cities are expected to be commenced before the end of this year, "Sabah" writes. The Greek Cypriot Administration is also preparing a package of economic and trade measures for improving dialogue with northern Cyprus, the paper reports.

Greeks want Wolfowitz out: American Hellenic Institute (AHI) claimed that Paul Wolfowitz's 'pro-Turkey' policies have been harmful to US interests, and urged him to be sacked, Turkish papers report. AHI President Gene Rossides said Turkey did not support the US in the war with Iraq. The Turkish Administration has been cruel to minorities, and violates human rights, Rossides claimed. AHI has also asked for resignation of Pentagon's no 3 figure, Douglas Feith.

Turkish humanitarian aid for Palestine: FM Gul said Turkish government would send food, medicine and medical equipment worth of \$1 million and donate three ambulances to the Palestinian government. The humanitarian aid will be dispatched to Palestine this week via Syria and Jordan, Gul noted.

Ankara to invite bids for helicopter contract: Turkey's Defense Industry Undersecretary Murat Bayar said new bids would be invited next month for attack helicopters following the cancellation of a previous helicopter project, "Cumhuriyet" reports. Interested companies will be given a few months to put forward offers, and the decision will be made early next year, Bayar said.

EDITORIAL OPINION:

"Iran-France or Middle East-Europe" Murat Yetkin commented in the liberal-intellectual Radikal (7/28): "Following his visit to France, PM Erdogan's visit to Iran, which started yesterday, helps us to weigh Turkey's political options. Turkey's biggest expectation from the visit to France was to attain EU membership, which was on the top of its list of strategic targets. Prior to Erdogan's visit to France, Turkey was experiencing an internal policy debate over head scarves. France's firm support of Turkey's separation of church and state was proof of France's support of Turkey's secular structure. It is nice that Mrs. Erdogan is accompanying her husband to Iran. But it would be very pleasing, not only for the PM but for the Turkish public too, if Mrs. Erdogan had been invited to France too. As a matter of fact, Iran is under a repressive administration today, where women have no rights and they have to be covered from top to toe. Because the U.S. is looking for an excuse to attack Iran, there is international pressure on Iran to open its nuclear program to inspections. Turkey's expectations from the visit to Iran concern warning Iran on their nuclear program, reducing Iran's gas prices, and asking for support against PKK. Because, Turkey and Iran's interests overlap, Iran's cooperation on these issues is very likely. In short, Turkey's aim to integrate with the West is to obtain politically permeable borders with the West. And Turkey's aim with the East is for more impermeable borders. The Turkish-Iranian border is the world's oldest land border. And, everyone can benefit if this border becomes the Europe's border on the east."

"No Voter's Last Hope is the EU Commission" Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in the mass appeal Posta (7/28): "I have noticed during the latest visit to France that even

countries formerly objecting to Turkey's accession, now say, 'if the European Union Commission report on Turkey is positive, we won't object'. No one greets Turkey willingly. But, no one expresses objections openly either. Everyone passes the ball to the EU Commission. There are two reasons for this attitude. The first and the most important reason is to blame the commission for starting the membership negotiations with Turkey. Since public opinion is strongly opposed on the matter, rather than taking the blame, governments prefer to hide behind the commission. The second reason has more ugly intentions. Commission reports are never black or white. The purpose is to give the member countries more room to maneuver when they are making political decisions. Even though there are differences from time to time, in general, commission reports are accepted. That is why the Commission's report on Turkey is very important for the member countries. The only hope for the European capitals, which want the negotiations to be postponed for a while but do not want to deteriorate the relations with Ankara, is for the commission to emphasize the negative aspects in the report. In summary, the EU members will be using the EU commission as an excuse to object to Turkey's accession." DEUTSCH